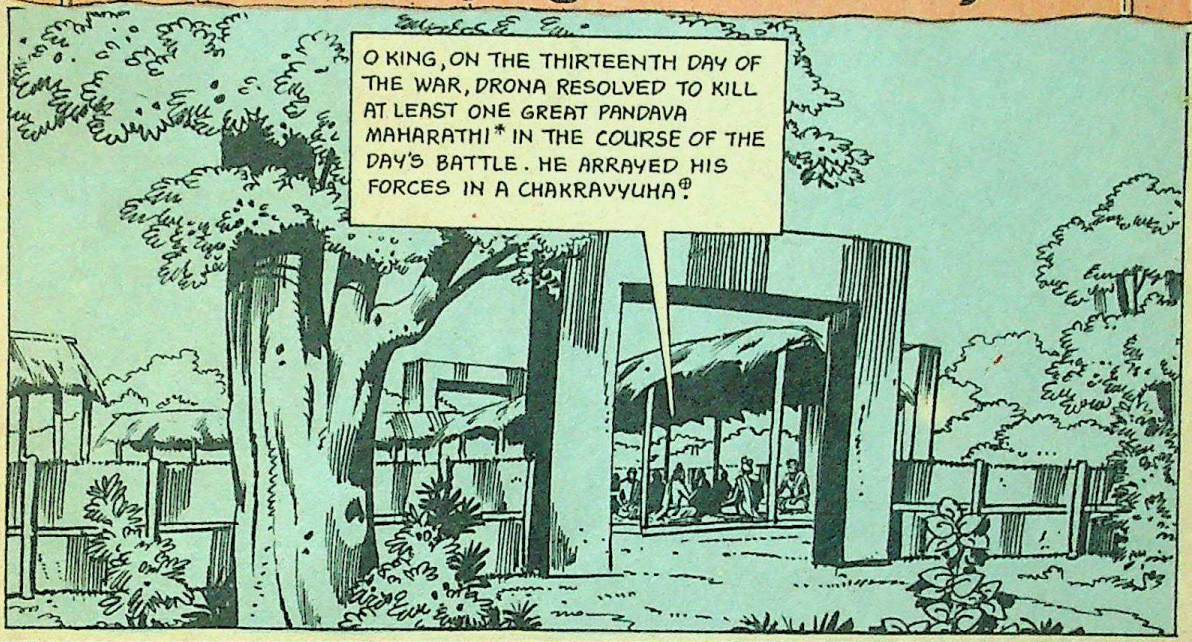
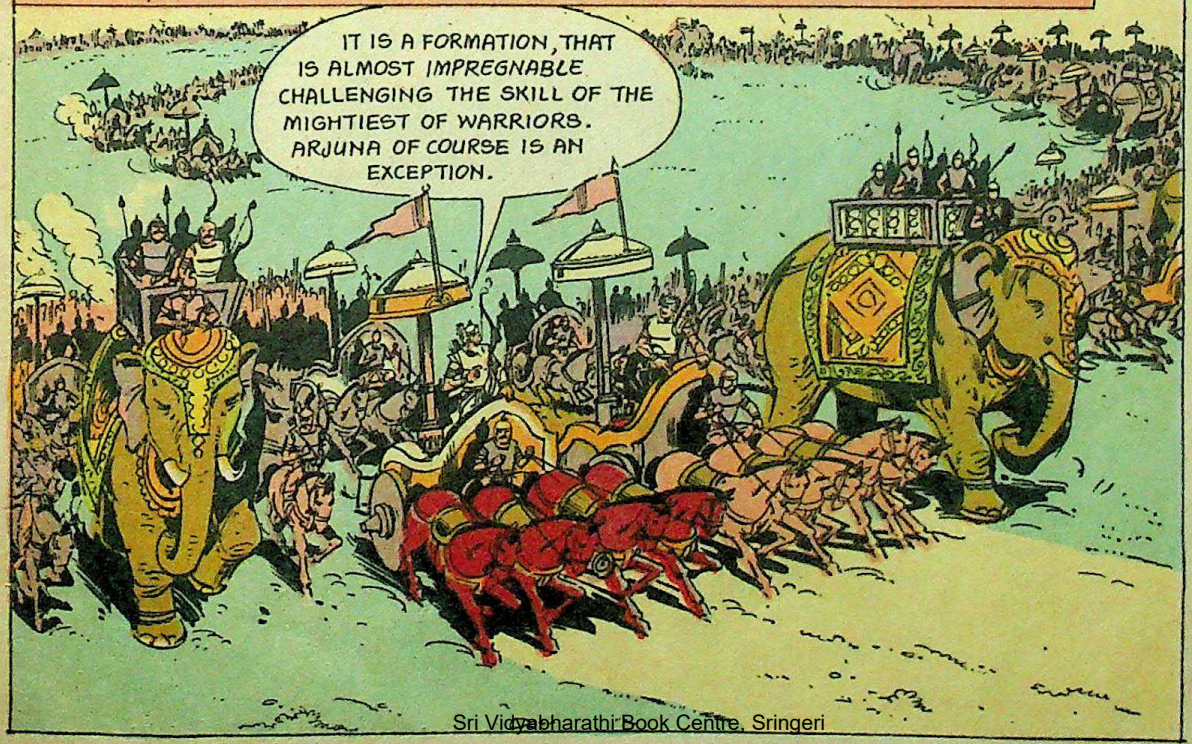
CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

Mahabharata – 34
The Slaying Of Abhimanyu


O KING, ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE WAR, DRONA RESOLVED TO KILL AT LEAST ONE GREAT PANDAVA MAHARATHI* IN THE COURSE OF THE DAY'S BATTLE. HE ARRAYED HIS FORCES IN A CHAKRAVYUHA⊕.

"JAYADRATHA STOOD FIRM LIKE MOUNT MERU BESIDE DRONA AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CHAKRAVYUHA. BEHIND HIM WERE ASHWATTHAMA AND OTHER WARRIORS.


IT IS A FORMATION, THAT IS ALMOST IMPREGNABLE CHALLENGING THE SKILL OF THE MIGHTIEST OF WARRIORS. ARJUNA OF COURSE IS AN EXCEPTION.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

* THE HIGHEST HONOUR BESTOWED ON A WARRIOR. ⊕ WHEEL FORMATION.

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

THERE IS SCARCELY ANYTHING ABOUT WARFARE THAT ARJUNA DOESN'T KNOW. YOU MUST SOMEHOW DISTRACT HIS ATTENTION FROM THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

"TO THE FAR SOUTH OF THE BATTLEFIELD AWAY FROM THE CHAKRAVYUHA, THE SAMSHAPTAKAS* HAILED ARJUNA.

ARJUNA! YOU HAVE STILL NOT VANQUISHED US!

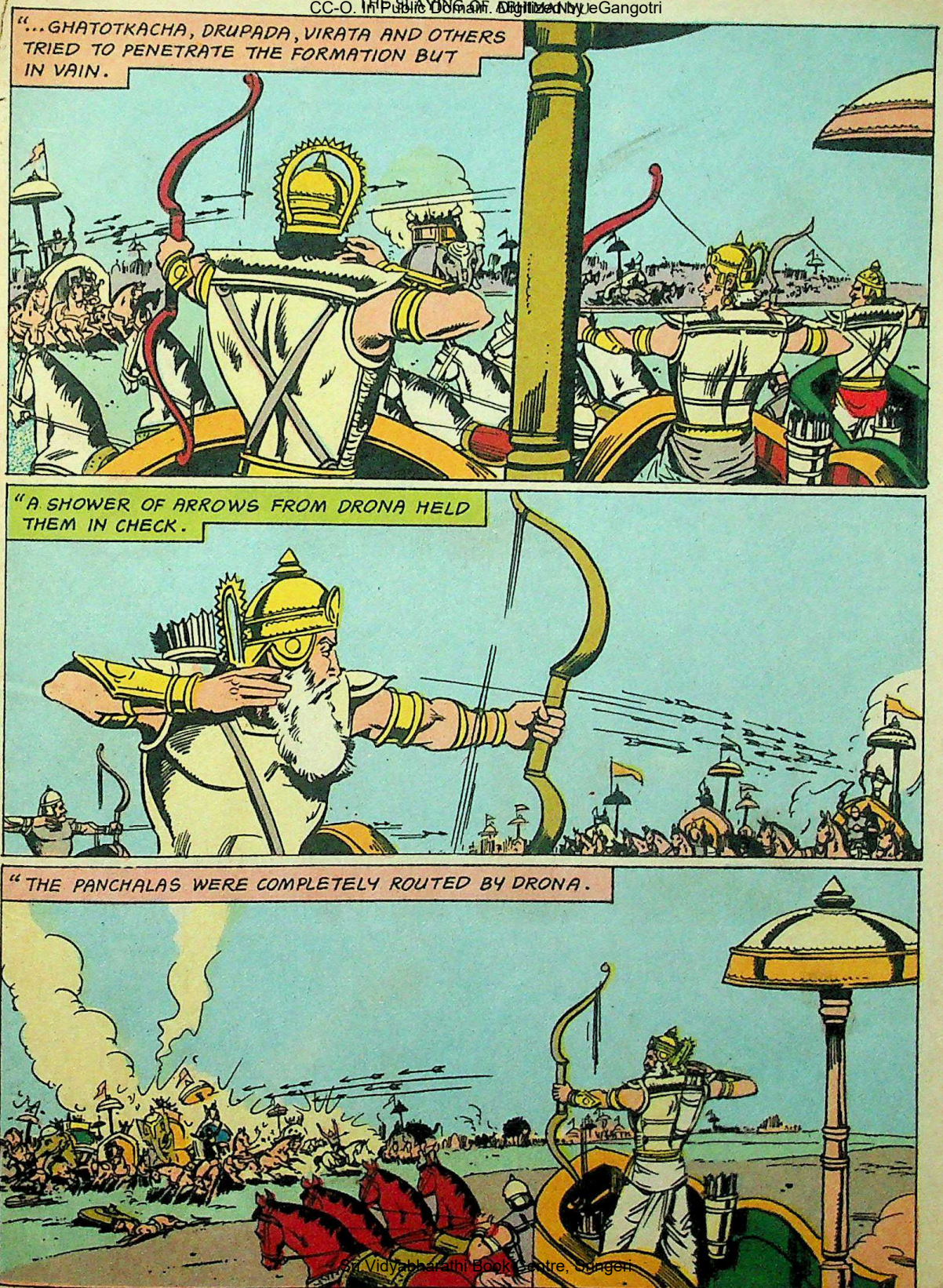
THE SAMSHAPTAKAS ARE AGAIN CHALLENGING ME!

"ARJUNA RESPONDED TO THEIR CHALLENGE AGAIN, LEAVING THE PANDAVA ARMY TO STRUGGLE AGAINST DRONA'S DIFFICULT CHAKRA FORMATION. ALL THE GREAT PANDAVA WARRIORS DHRISTRADYUMNA, SHIKHANDI, NAKULA, SAHADEVA...

S... Mahabharata Art Centre, Sringeri

* MERCENARIES WHO VOW NOT TO LEAVE THE BATTLEFIELD, WITHOUT WINNING.

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri


"...GHATOTKACHA, DRUPADA, VIRATA AND OTHERS TRIED TO PENETRATE THE FORMATION BUT IN VAIN.
"A SHOWER OF ARROWS FROM DRONA HELD THEM IN CHECK.
"THE PANCHALAS WERE COMPLETELY ROUTED BY DRONA.

CC-O. In Public Domain. Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"YUDHISHTHIRA WAS EXASPERATED.
IS THERE NONE IN OUR ARMY WHO CAN FACE DRONA'S WRATH ?
"HE TURNED TO ABHIMANYU, THE YOUNG SON OF ARJUNA —
DO SOMETHING TO SAVE US THE EMBARRASSMENT WHEN ARJUNA RETURNS FROM FIGHTING THE SAMSHAPTAKAS.
NONE OF US KNOW HOW TO GET ACROSS THIS CHAKRAVYUHA.
BESIDES KRISHNA, ARJUNA AND PRADYUMNA, ONLY YOU KNOW HOW TO BREAK THROUGH THE CHAKRAVYUHA.
ABHIMANYU, USE YOUR VALOUR AND SKILL AT THIS CRUCIAL HOUR AND DESTROY DRONA'S FORCES!

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Trust, Bangalore

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"ABHIMANYU REPLIED —

O GREAT KING! FOR THE GLORY OF MY RACE I SHALL CERTAINLY FORCE MY WAY THROUGH THIS FORMIDABLE FORMATION BUT...

...I KNOW ONLY HOW TO PENETRATE THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

IF I AM TRAPPED INSIDE, I WON'T KNOW HOW TO FIND MY WAY OUT.

O ABHIMANYU! MAKE AN INROAD INTO THIS IMPENETRABLE FORMATION. WE WILL ALL FOLLOW YOU INSIDE AND PROTECT YOU THEREAFTER.

"BHEEMA SAID —

SON, I WILL COME WITH YOU. BESIDES DHRISTRADYUMNA, WITH HIS VALIANT PANCHALAS, WILL FOLLOW YOU.

AT EVERY POINT WHERE YOU BREAK THROUGH THE FORMATION, WE WILL KILL THE MIGHTY WARRIORS OF THE KAURAVAS AND CONTINUE TO SHATTER THE CHAKRA.

Sri Vidyabharati Book Centre, Sangeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"THE VALOROUS ABHIMANYU DECLARED —

SUCH A FEAT WILL I PERFORM TODAY THAT MY PARENTS AND MY UNCLE KRISHNA WILL BE PROUD OF ME.

COME, CHARIOTEER, LEAD ME ON TO DRONA.

"THE CHARIOTEER REPLIED —

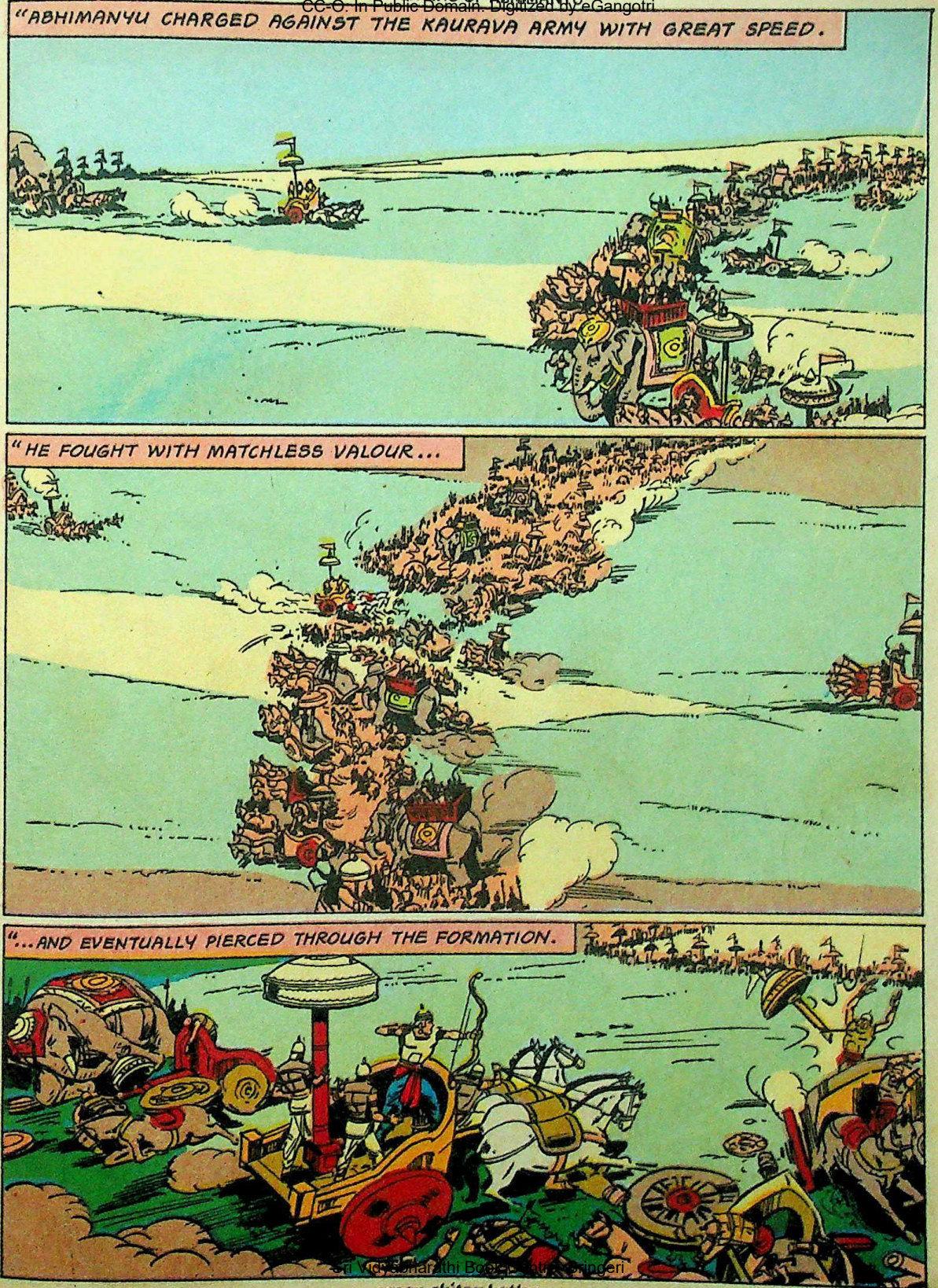
THIS IS A TREMENDOUS TASK ASSIGNED TO YOU BY YOUR ELDERS. PAUSE AND PONDER AWHILE BEFORE YOU SET FORTH.

"ABHIMANYU LAUGHED ALOUD.

I CAN VANQUISH DRONA'S FORCES WITH EASE. LET US PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY.

Sri Vijaya Vithala Book Centre, Singeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri


"ABHIMANYU CHARGED AGAINST THE KAURAVA ARMY WITH GREAT SPEED.
"HE FOUGHT WITH MATCHLESS VALOUR...
"...AND EVENTUALLY PIERCED THROUGH THE FORMATION.

Sri Vidya Bharathi Book Exhibition, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"HOWEVER, WITHIN MOMENTS, THE KAURAVA WARRIORS SURROUNDED HIM.

"IT WAS A FEARFUL BATTLE THAT ABHIMANYU FOUGHT SINGLE-HANDEDLY.

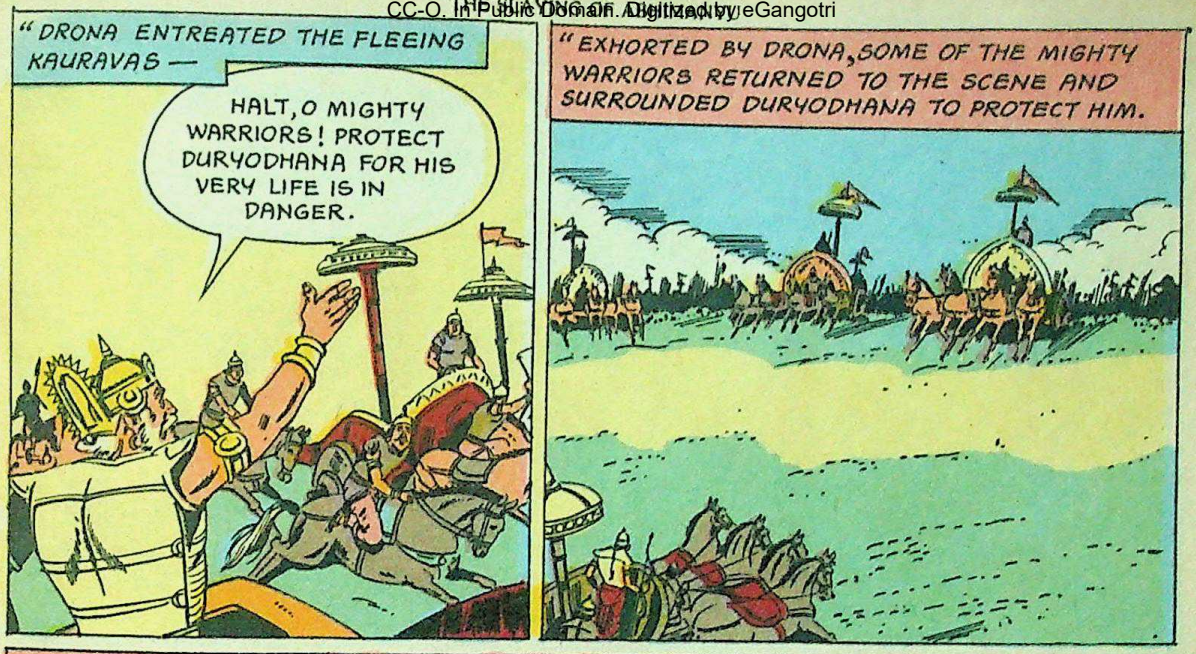
"CHARIOTS FELL INTO PIECES AS HE ADVANCED.

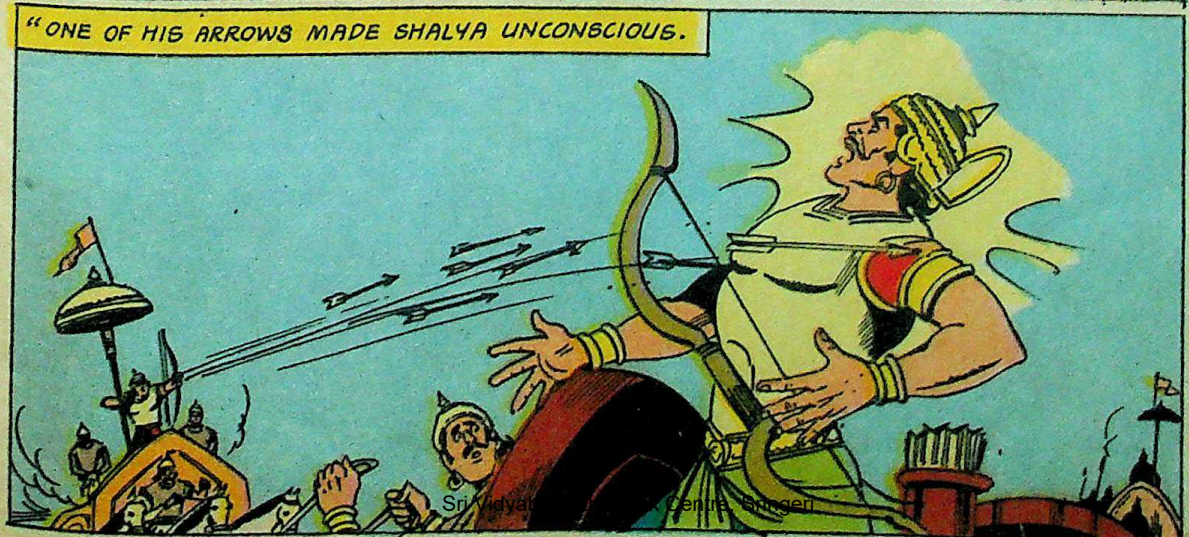
"THE FRIGHTENED KAURAVA ARMY SCATTERED PELL-MELL.

"UNABLE TO CONTAIN HIS ANGER, DURYODHANA CHARGED AHEAD AGAINST ABHIMANYU.

Sri Vidyabharati Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri


"DRONA ENTREATED THE FLEEING KAURAVAS —
HALT, O MIGHTY WARRIORS! PROTECT DURYODHANA FOR HIS VERY LIFE IS IN DANGER.
"EXHORTED BY DRONA, SOME OF THE MIGHTY WARRIORS RETURNED TO THE SCENE AND SURROUNDED DURYODHANA TO PROTECT HIM.



Sri Vidyaranya Samsthana Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"EXCEEDINGLY PLEASED WITH ABHIMANYU'S VALOUR, DRONA SAID TO KRIPA —

THERE IS NONE AS VALIANT IN BATTLE AS YOUNG ABHIMANYU AND YET HE APPEARS TO BE FIGHTING WITH RESTRAIN-

"THIS MADE DURYODHANA VERY ANGRY. HE DECLARED —

DRONA IS DELIBERATELY SPARING THE LIFE OF ABHIMANYU, SON OF HIS FAVOURITE PUPIL ARJUNA.

SAFE UNDER DRONA'S PROTECTION, ABHIMANYU IS ACTING BRAVE AND MIGHTY. VANQUISH HIM! KILL HIM!

"DUHSHASANA SAID —

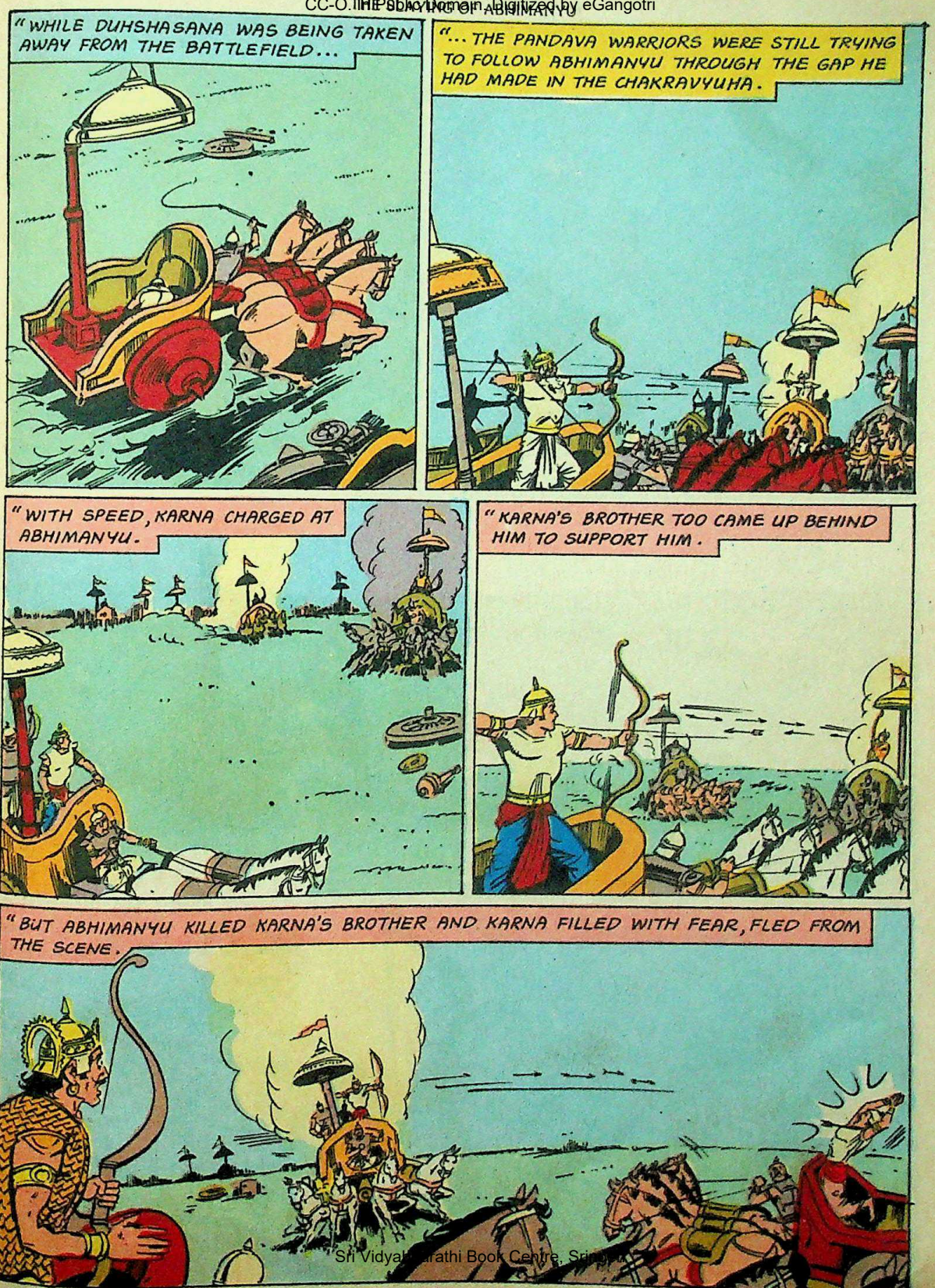
I SWEAR I WILL KILL THIS SON OF ARJUNA!

"AS DUHSHASANA APPROACHED, ABHIMANYU SHATTERED HIS BOW WITH AN ARROW.

"HE THEN SHOT ARROW AFTER DEADLY ARROW WHICH WOUNDED DUHSHASANA AND KNOCKED HIM UNCON-SCIOUS.

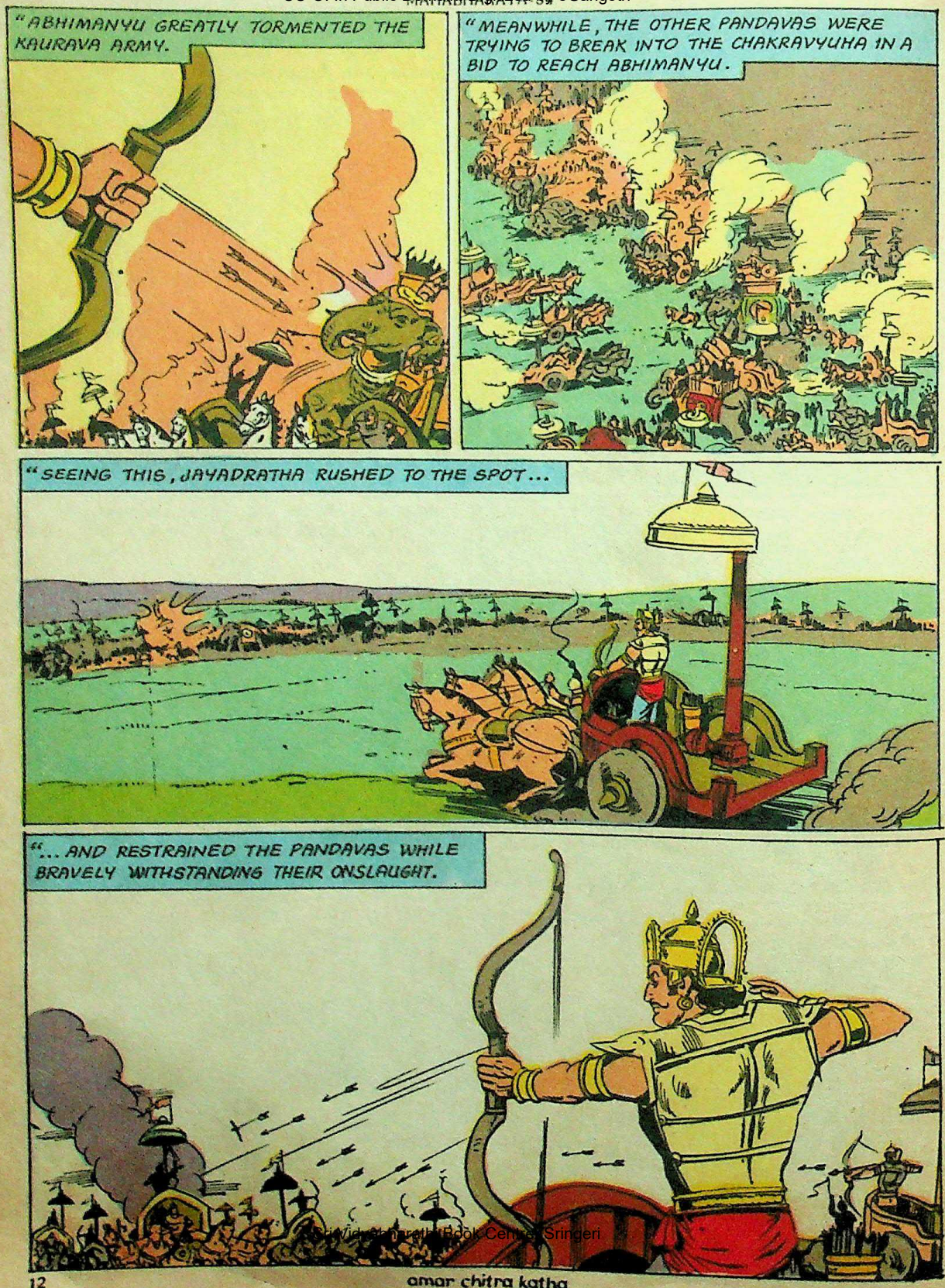
Vidyarthi Pathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri


"WHILE DUHSHASANA WAS BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD...
"... THE PANDAVA WARRIORS WERE STILL TRYING TO FOLLOW ABHIMANYU THROUGH THE GAP HE HAD MADE IN THE CHAKRAVYUHA.
"WITH SPEED, KARNA CHARGED AT ABHIMANYU.
"KARNA'S BROTHER TOO CAME UP BEHIND HIM TO SUPPORT HIM.
"BUT ABHIMANYU KILLED KARNA'S BROTHER AND KARNA FILLED WITH FEAR, FLED FROM THE SCENE.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Srinagar

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri


"ABHIMANYU GREATLY TORMENTED THE KAURAVA ARMY.
"MEANWHILE, THE OTHER PANDAVAS WERE TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE CHAKRAVYUHA IN A BID TO REACH ABHIMANYU.
"SEEING THIS, JAYADRATHA RUSHED TO THE SPOT...
"... AND RESTRAINED THE PANDAVAS WHILE BRAVELY WITHSTANDING THEIR ONSLAUGHT.

CC-O. Vidya Bharati Book Center, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

O SANJAYA, HOW DID JAYADRATHA RESTRAIN THE ADVANCE OF THE PANDAVA ARMY ?
JAYADRATHA, O KING, RUSHED TO THE SPOT WHERE ABHIMANYU HAD BROKEN THE FORMATION OF THE CHAKRAVYUHA.
"HE WOUNDED BHEEMA, DHRISHTADYUMNA, VIRATA, DRUPADA, SHIKHANDI AND YUDHISHTHIRA WITH AN INCESSANT FUSILLADE OF ARROWS.
"AND THEN HE OBSTRUCTED THE PATH OF THE PANDAVA ARMY WITH A BARRAGE OF ARROWS.

CC-O. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection.

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"THE KAURAVAS HAILED JAYADRATHA'S VALOUR AND RUSHED TO HIS SUPPORT.

BRAVO, JAYADRATHA!

WELL DONE, JAYADRATHA!

SANJAYA, I'M SURPRISED AT THE VALOUR AND STRENGTH OF JAYADRATHA. HOW DID HE ACCOMPLISH THIS REMARKABLE FEAT SINGLE-HANDED?

O KING, WHEN THE PANDAVAS WERE LIVING IN THE FOREST, JAYADRATHA HAD ABDUCTED DRAUPADI. HOWEVER, THE PANDAVAS CHASED HIM, FOUGHT WITH HIM AND FREED DRAUPADI.

"A HUMILIATED JAYADRATHA THEN PERFORMED SEVERE AUSTERITES. SHIVA THEN BLESSED HIM —

FOR A BOON, HE ASKED SHIVA THE POWER TO OPPOSE THE PANDAVAS IN WARFARE. HENCE ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY, HE WAS ABLE TO CONTAIN THEIR ADVANCE.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"SEEING ALL THE KAURAVAS TORMENTED BY ABHIMANYU, KARNA ASKED DRONA —

HOW CAN WE KILL ABHIMANYU, O GRANDSIRE?

"DRONA ANSWERED —

HURT AS I AM BY HIS ARROWS, I CANNOT HELP BUT ADMIRE HIS SPEED AND SKILL.

"KARNA SAID —

OH! THE PAIN HE IS CAUSING ME WITH HIS ARROWS IS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BEAR. BUT FOR THE CALL OF DUTY AS A WARRIOR I WOULD HAVE FLED THE FIELD.

"DRONA LAUGHED ALOUD AND SAID TO KARNA—

IT WAS I WHO TAUGHT HIS FATHER, ARJUNA, TO DON THE ARMOUR IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO ARROW CAN PIERCE IT. ABHIMANYU HAS OBVIOUSLY LEARNT THE ART FROM HIS FATHER.

HIS ARMOUR IS IMPENETRABLE. TRY, IF YOU CAN, TO CUT HIS BOW STRING FROM BEHIND, AND DESTROY HIS CHARIOT.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"EAGERLY FOLLOWING DURYODHANA'S ADVICE, KARNA SHOT ABHIMANYU'S BOW TO PIECES.

"KRITAVARMA KILLED ABHIMANYU'S HORSES.

"AND KRIPA SHOT DEAD BOTH THE REAR ATTENDANTS OF ABHIMANYU.

"AND THEN SIX MAHARATHIS SHOWERED ARROWS ON THE YOUNG WARRIOR WHO HAD BEEN DEPRIVED OF HIS CHARIOT.

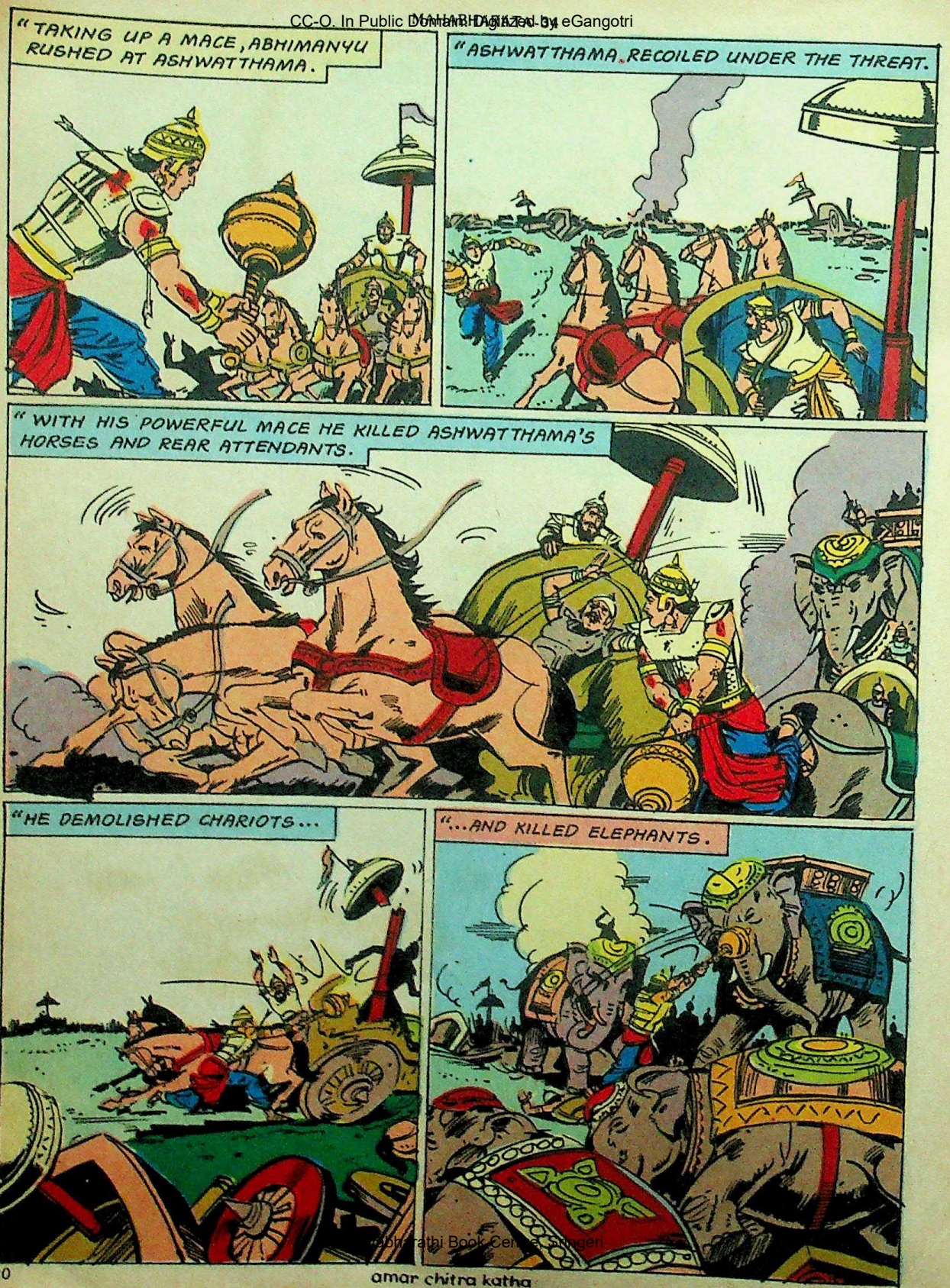
Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Singeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"UNDAUNTED, ABHIMANYU PICKED UP A SWORD AND SHIELD AND JUMPED INTO THE FRAY.
"DRONA CUT THE SWORD AT THE HILT WITH SHARP ARROWS.
"ABHIMANYU'S SHIELD WAS SHATTERED BY KARNA.
"THE YOUNG WARRIOR THEN PICKED UP A WHEEL OF HIS CART AND RUSHED AT DRONA.
"BUT THE KAURAVA WARRIORS BROKE THE WHEEL INTO PIECES.

Sri Vidyabhavan Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri


"TAKING UP A MACE, ABHIMANYU RUSHED AT ASHWATTHAMA.
"ASHWATTHAMA RECOILED UNDER THE THREAT.
"WITH HIS POWERFUL MACE HE KILLED ASHWATTHAMA'S HORSES AND REAR ATTENDANTS.
"HE DEMOLISHED CHARIOTS...
"...AND KILLED ELEPHANTS.

Bharathi Book Centre, Shringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"HIS CHARIOT DESTROYED BY ABHIMANYU, DUHSHASANA'S SON ALSO TOOK UP A MACE.
"HURT BY EACH OTHER'S BLOWS, BOTH COLLAPSED SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE GROUND.
"THE SON OF DUHSHASANA WAS THE FIRST TO RECOVER.
"HE GOT UP AND STRUCK A HEAVY BLOW ON ABHIMANYU'S FOREHEAD...
"...ABHIMANYU FELL NEVER TO RISE AGAIN.
HE IS DEAD.
THE SON OF ARJUNA IS SLAIN!
ABHIMANYU IS KILLED!

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Singapore

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"THE SOLDIERS OF THE PANDAVA ARMY WERE TERRIFIED TO HEAR THE NEWS. THEY BEGAN TO FLEE THE BATTLEFIELD.

RUN!

ABHIMANYU IS DEAD!

ABHIMANYU KILLED!

RUN!

"YUDHISHTHIRA TRIED TO STOP HIS MEN FROM RUNNING AWAY.

COME BACK! ABHIMANYU HAS SURELY ATTAINED HEAVEN BY THE VALOUR SHOWN ON THE BATTLEFIELD. HAVE PATIENCE, WE WILL OVERCOME THE ENEMIES.

"BUT THE DEMORALISED PANDAVA ARMY RETURNED TO THE CAMP IN DEEP SORROW.

"INCONSOLABLE, YUDHISHTHIRA LAMENTED.

ALAS! KRISHNA'S BELOVED NEPHEW, THE VALIANT ABHIMANYU, IS DEAD.

HOW WILL I FACE ARJUNA NOW? HOW WILL I FACE THE BEREAVED MOTHER SUBHADRA?

HOW WILL WE RELATE THIS TRAGEDY TO KRISHNA AND ARJUNA?

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

IT'S ALL MY FAULT. OH, FIE ON ME. IN MY GREED FOR A KINGDOM, I SENT A MERE LAD TO THE JAWS OF DEATH!
WITH ABHIMANYU DEAD, VICTORY IN WAR, KINGDOM, IMMORTALITY OR A PLACE IN HEAVEN CANNOT GIVE ME ANY HAPPINESS!
"THE SAGE VYASA APPEARED BEFORE YUDHISHTHIRA AND CONSOLED HIM—
O YUDHISHTHIRA, THOUGH YET A CHILD, ABHIMANYU FOUGHT LIKE A TRUE WARRIOR AND HAS ASCENDED TO HEAVEN. GRIEVE NOT, O WISE ONE, OVER HIS DEATH!
EVEN THE MOST VIRTUOUS OF MEN HAVE EVENTUALLY BEEN CONSUMED BY DEATH. GRIEVE NOT OVER THE DEATH OF ABHIMANYU, FOR...
...THE ONE WHO IS BORN IS CERTAIN TO DIE.
"...BUT HE WONDERED—
WHAT SHALL I SAY TO ARJUNA?
"THUS WAS YUDHISHTHIRA CONSOLED...

CC-O. In Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Stinger

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"MEANWHILE, ARJUNA ON HIS WAY BACK FROM HIS WAR WITH THE SAMSHAPTAKAS SAID TO KRISHNA ...

O KRISHNA! I SEE ILL OMENS. MY HEART BEATS FASTER, MY VOICE QUAVERS AND MY BODY GOES LIMP, I WONDER...

A NAMELESS ANXIETY GRIPS ME, O KESHAVA. I HOPE MY BROTHER, KING YUDHISHTHIRA, IS WELL.

"KRISHNA CONSOLED ARJUNA AND STEERED THE CHARIOT TOWARDS THE CAMP.

"AS THEY ENTERED THE CAMP, ARJUNA WAS SHOCKED BY THE SILENCE THAT GREETED HIM. HE ASKED KRISHNA —

WHY ARE THE INSTRUMENTS NOT PLAYING AUSPICIOUS MUSIC TODAY? WHY DO MY SOLDIERS TURN THEIR FACES AWAY?

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

WHY DOES NOT MY SON ABHIMANYU COME RUNNING TO GREET ME?
"WHEN HE SAW HIS BROTHERS IMMERSED IN A DEEP GLOOM...
"...HE GUESSED THE TRUTH.
ALAS! MY SON IS NO MORE!
I HEARD THAT DRONA HAD ARRAYED HIS FORCES IN CHAKRAVYUHA FORMATION. AMONG YOU ONLY ABHIMANYU KNEW HOW TO PENETRATE THAT.
I HAD NOT YET TAUGHT ABHIMANYU HOW TO COME OUT OF THE CHAKRA FORMATION. COULD IT BE THAT...
...YOU SENT THE CHILD INTO THE DEADLY FORMATION?

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Srinagar

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"HIS WORDS MET WITH SILENCE ALL AROUND.
TELL ME HOW MY BRAVE SON WAS KILLED IN BATTLE.
FOR WHOSE SAKE WILL I LIVE NOW THAT MY DEAR SON IS NO MORE? WHENCE WILL MY HEART FIND PEACE.
THE BELOVED OF ALL, ABHIMANYU LIES FORLORN AMID BEASTS AND BIRDS OF PREY.
HOW UNFORTUNATE I AM TO BE BEREFT OF YOU, MY SON!

Sri Vidyabhathi Book Centre, Shringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"TURNING TO YUDHISHTHIRA HE SAID—
DID MY SON DIE FIGHTING THE MIGHTY MAHARATHIS?
SURELY THEY MUST HAVE POUNCED ON HIM WHEN HE WAS ISOLATED. AND HE MUST HAVE REMEMBERED ME WHILE DYING.
HOW WILL I FACE DRAUPADI AND SUBHADRA?
"SEEING ARJUNA IN UTTER SORROW, KRISHNA CONSOLED HIM.
DO NOT DESPAIR SO, FRIEND. TAKE COURAGE.
ALL GREAT WARRIORS CRAVE FOR DEATH IN THE BATTLEFIELD AND ABHIMANYU WAS FORTUNATE TO DIE SO BRAVELY.
YOUR SORROW IS CASTING A GLOOM OVER ALL YOUR BROTHERS AND FRIENDS HERE. REASSURE THEM, O HERO!

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"ARJUNA LOOKED UP AT HIS BROTHERS AND SAID —
TELL ME HOW EXACTLY ABHIMANYU WAS KILLED. TOMORROW I WILL BE THE DEATH OF ALL THOSE WHO KILLED HIM.
"AND THEN HE ASKED —
HOW COULD ABHIMANYU BE KILLED WHEN ALL OF YOU, FULLY ARMED, WERE PROTECTING HIM? HAD I KNOWN THAT THE PANDAVAS AND PANCHALAS WERE TOGETHER INCAPABLE OF PROTECTING MY SON...
...I WOULD MYSELF HAVE LOOKED AFTER HIM.
I SHOULD BLAME MYSELF FOR LEAVING HIM WITH COWARDS LIKE YOU. WHO COULD NOT DEFEND A MERE LAD AND WHO CAN ONLY TALK BIG.
"NO ONE WAS ABLE TO FACE THE AGONIZED ARJUNA OR TO SPEAK A WORD TO HIM...

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri/Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Singeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

"...FINALLY YUDHISHTHIRA WHOSE HEART BRIMMED WITH LOVE AND RESPECT FOR ARJUNA, SPOKE —

O ARJUNA, TORMENTED BY DRONA, WHO WANTED TO TAKE ME CAPTIVE, WE REQUESTED ABHIMANYU TO BREAK THROUGH THE CHARAVYUHA. THAT COURAGEOUS HERO AGREED.

"AND YUDHISHTHIRA NARRATED HOW JAYADRATHA, WITH THE ASSURANCE OF THE BOON GIVEN BY SHIVA, RESTRAINED THE PANDAVAS FROM GOING TO THE HELP OF ABHIMANYU.

AND THE SIX MAHARATHIS PUT ABHIMANYU TO DEATH. SINCE THEN, O ARJUNA, WE HAVE BEEN STRICKEN BY GRIEF.

AH MY SON!

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

CC-O. In Public Domain. Digitized by eGangotri

ON HE RECOVERED. TREMBLING IN INDIGNATION, HE ANNOUNCED.

I WILL KILL JAYADRATHA TOMORROW.

ANYONE WHO DARES TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA SHALL DIE AT MY HANDS.

"AND THEN —

IF I FAIL TO KILL JAYADRATHA BY SUNDOWN TOMORROW, I WILL CONSIGN MYSELF TO FLAMES.

O KING, ANGERED BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON, ARJUNA THUS TOOK THE VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA BEFORE SUNDOWN NEXT DAY.

"THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA MAHABHARATA.

CC-O. Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri.